



State of Wisconsin
Barbara Lawton, Lt. Governor

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent



******NEWS RELEASE******

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, March 28, 2008

CONTACT: Robert Chappell, Office of the Lt. Governor, (608) 261-2165
Patrick Gasper, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

**Lt. Governor Lawton and State Superintendent Burmaster
announce
Wisconsin Task Force on Arts and Creativity in Education**

MADISON—At a press conference today at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton and State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster announced they will co-chair the Wisconsin Task Force on Arts and Creativity in Education, convened to ensure Wisconsin has the creative workforce and entrepreneurial talent needed in the 21st century global economy.

The two constitutional officers will invite members from a broad cross-section of the business, arts, and education communities. The Task Force will accept expert testimony from others in public forums to be held around the state.

Lawton chairs the Wisconsin Arts Board, and was recently invited to represent the states' interests on an exclusive National Arts Policy Roundtable convened by Robert Redford and Americans for the Arts at the Sundance Preserve last fall. Their policy recommendations, forthcoming, will address the topic "Thinking Creatively, Working Globally: The Role of the Arts in Building a 21st Century American Workforce."

Burmaster recently led a Wisconsin delegation to the Education Leaders Institute, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, to bring a national focus to the importance of arts education.

"Creativity and innovation will be the cornerstone of Wisconsin competitiveness in the years ahead," Lawton said. "We must make strategic investments now to ensure Wisconsin has the bright innovators and entrepreneurs we need to drive our state forward."

"The arts build 21st century skills. From my experience as a music teacher, drama director, district fine arts coordinator, and principal of a creative arts magnet school, I know that the arts not only boost student achievement in school, they reinforce the knowledge and abilities business and industry needs today and for the future," Burmaster said. "The work of this task force to improve access and equity in arts education as part of a balanced curriculum is vital for our students and the future of our state and nation."

The task force will examine state-level policies and local practices to determine their impact on the scope and access to quality arts education opportunities in Wisconsin; recommend refinement and changes, as well as new initiatives, to support arts education, creativity, and innovation; and identify state and local agencies, organizations, and businesses that can collaborate to provide leadership and resources in support of arts education, creativity, and innovation.

###